

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Chapter 1—Introduction	1-1
1.1 Purpose, Need, and Scope	1-3
1.2 Planning Area	1-3
1.3 Planning Process Description	1-4
1.4 Planning Schedule	1-6
1.5 Planning Issues	1-6
1.6 Planning Criteria	1-8
1.7 Consistency with Local, State, Tribal, and other Federal Plans	1-11
1.8 Current Planning in the Region	1-12
1.9 Using This Document	1-14
Chapter 2—Alternatives	2-1
Introduction	2-1
Vision and Concept	2-1
Alternatives	2-2
Alternatives Considered But Eliminated from Detailed Study	2-3
Presentation of Alternatives	2-4
Amendments to BLM's California Desert Conservation Area Plan 1980	2-5
2.1 Issue: Standards and Guidelines	2-7
2.1.1 Goals and Objectives	2-9
2.1.2 No Action Alternative	2-9
2.1.3 Proposed Plan	2-11
2.1.4 Small DWMA--A Alternative	2-15
2.1.5 Small DWMA--B Alternative	2-16
2.2 Issue: Recovery of the Desert Tortoise	2-17
2.2.1 Goals and Objectives	2-17
2.2.2 No Action Alternative	2-21
2.2.3 Proposed Plan	2-25
2.2.4 Small DWMA--A Alternative	2-33
2.2.5 Small DWMA--B Alternative	2-37
2.3 Issue: Management of Special Status Animals and Plants and Natural Communities	2-42
2.3.1 Desert Bighorn Sheep Conservation--Goals and Objectives	2-42
2.3.1.1 No Action Alternative	2-45
2.3.1.2 Proposed Plan	2-45
2.3.1.3 Small DWMA--A Alternative	2-48
2.3.1.4 Small DWMA--B Alternative	2-49
2.3.2 Desert Mule Deer Management--Goals and Objectives	2-50
2.3.2.1 No Action Alternative	2-51
2.3.2.2 Proposed Plan	2-51
2.3.2.3 Small DWMA--A Alternative	2-51

2.3.2.4	Small DWMA--B Alternative	2-52
2.3.3	Other Special Status Animal and Plant Species, Natural Communities, and Ecological Processes--Goals and Objectives	2-52
2.3.3.1	No Action Alternative	2-54
2.3.3.2	Proposed Plan	2-55
2.3.3.3	Small DWMA--A Alternative	2-59
2.3.3.4	Small DWMA--B Alternative	2-59
2.4	Issue: Wild Horses and Burros	2-62
2.4.1	Goals and Objectives	2-61
2.4.2	No Action Alternative	2-63
2.4.3	Proposed Plan	2-63
2.4.4	Small DWMA--A Alternative	2-64
2.4.5	Small DWMA--B Alternative	2-64
2.5	Issue: Motorized-Vehicle Access, Routes of Travel Designations, and Recreation	2-66
2.5.1	Goals and Objectives	2-66
2.5.2	Decisions and Policy Common to all Alternatives	2-67
2.5.3	No Action Alternative	2-72
2.5.4	Proposed Plan	2-77
2.5.5	Small DWMA--A Alternative	2-82
2.5.6	Small DWMA--B Alternative	2-86
2.6	Issue: Land Ownership Pattern	2-90
2.6.1	Goals and Objectives	2-90
2.6.2	No Action Alternative	2-92
2.6.3	Proposed Plan	2-93
2.6.4	Small DWMA--A Alternative	2-94
2.6.5	Small DWMA--B Alternative	2-95
2.7	Access to Resources for Economic and Social Needs	2-97
2.8	Incorporation of Changes to the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan Created by the California Desert Protection Act (CDPA)	2-98
2.8.1	No Action Alternative	2-98
2.8.2	Proposed Plan	2-98
2.8.3	Small DWMA--A Alternative	2-99
2.8.4	Small DWMA--B Alternative	2-99
2.9	Comparison of Alternatives	2-100
Chapter 3-Affected Environment	3-1	
3.1	Air Quality	3-1
3.2	Water Quality	3-3
3.3	Soil Quality	3-4
3.4	Biological Resources	3-4
3.4.1	Biological Resources Management Tools	3-4
3.4.2	Wildlife	3-12
3.4.3	Special Status Plants	3-23
3.4.4	Natural Communities	3-27
3.5	Wilderness Management	3-32

3.5.1	California Desert Protection Act (Public Law 103-433)	3-33
3.5.2	Wildlife Water Developments in Wilderness	3-35
3.5.3	Reintroduction of Native Species in Wilderness	3-36
3.5.4	Research in Wilderness	3-36
3.5.5	MOU and Policy on Wildlife Management Activities in BLM Administered Wilderness	3-37
3.6	Livestock Grazing	3-37
3.6.1	Background	3-37
3.6.2	Rangeland Improvements	3-38
3.6.3	Grazing Activities	3-38
3.6.4	Grazing Administration	3-42
3.7	Wild Horse and Burro Management	3-43
3.7.1	Herd Areas	3-44
3.7.2	Herd Management Areas (general)	3-45
3.7.3	Chemehuevi and Havasu HMAs	3-46
3.7.4	Chocolate/Mule Mountains, Picacho and Cibola/Trigo HMAs	3-47
3.7.5	Population Controls	3-48
3.7.6	Management Complexity	3-48
3.7.7	Species Description--	3-49
3.7.8	Population Viability Analysis	3-50
3.7.9	California Desert District Burro Herd Areas and Herd Management Areas ..	3-50
3.8	Recreation Management	3-52
3.8.1	Multiple-Use Classes	3-55
3.8.2	Access	3-56
3.8.3	Washes	3-56
3.8.4	Organized Competitive Vehicle Events	3-57
3.8.5	Special Recreation Permits	3-59
3.8.6	Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Areas	3-60
3.8.7	California Back Country Discovery Trail	3-62
3.8.8	Rockhounding	3-63
3.8.9	Long-Term Visitor Areas	3-64
3.8.10	Joshua Tree National Park	3-64
3.8.11	Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range	3-64
3.8.12	Summary	3-65
3.9	Off-Highway Vehicle Use / Motorized Vehicle Access	3-66
3.9.1	Issuance of Executive Orders and Development of Regulations	3-66
3.9.2	Development of the CDCA Management Plan	3-67
3.9.3	1982 Amendment to the CDCA Management Plan	3-68
3.9.4	MUC Guidelines for Motorized-vehicle Access	3-68
3.9.5	Washes, Sand Dunes, and Dry Lakes	3-70
3.9.6	Route Designation Definitions	3-70
3.9.7	Route Designation and CDCA Management Plan Implementation	3-71
3.10	Mineral Management	3-73
3.11	Cultural Resources	3-74
3.11.1	Background	3-74

3.11.2	Historic and Archaeological Sites	3-76
3.11.3	Paleontological Resources	3-78
3.11.4	Traditional Cultural Properties	3-78
3.12	Land Use	3-79
3.12.1	Utilities	3-79
3.12.2	Withdrawals	3-79
3.12.3	Colorado River Aqueduct	3-80
3.12.4	Other Land Uses	3-80
Chapter 4—Environmental Consequences		4-1
Introduction		4-1
Assumptions For Analysis		4-1
Chapter Organization		4-1
Reasonably Foreseeable Future		4-2
4.1	No Action Alternative	4-5
4.1.2	Water Quality	4-6
4.1.3	Soil Quality	4-8
4.1.4	Biological Resources	4-12
4.1.4.1	Wildlife Management	4-12
4.1.4.2	Vegetation Management	4-31
4.1.5	Wilderness Management	4-42
4.1.6	Livestock Grazing Management	4-46
4.1.7	Wild Horses and Burro Management	4-49
4.1.8/9	Recreation Management and Motorized-Vehicle Access	4-51
4.1.10	Mineral Management	4-55
4.1.11	Cultural Management	4-56
4.1.12	Lands and Land Use Authorizations	4-63
4.1.13	Socio-Economic Values	4-64
4.2	Proposed Plan	4-67
4.2.1	Air Quality	4-67
4.2.2	Water Quality	4-69
4.2.3	Soil Quality	4-70
4.2.4	Biological Resources	4-73
4.2.4.1	Wildlife Management	4-73
4.2.4.2	Vegetation Management	4-80
4.2.5	Wilderness Management	4-85
4.2.6	Livestock Grazing Management	4-90
4.2.7	Wild Horses and Burro Management	4-91
4.2.8/9	Recreation Management	4-95
4.2.10	Mineral Management	4-98
4.2.11	Cultural Management	4-99
4.2.12	Lands and Land Use Authorization	4-103
4.2.13	Socioeconomic Values	4-104
4.3	Small DWMA--A Alternative	4-108
4.3.1	Air Quality	4-108

4.3.2	Water Quality	4-108
4.3.3	Soil Quality	4-109
4.3.4	Biological Resources	4-110
4.3.4.1	Wildlife Management	4-110
4.3.4.2	Vegetation Management	4-114
4.3.5	Wilderness Management	4-116
4.3.6	Livestock Grazing Management	4-118
4.3.7	Wild Horses and Burro Management	4-119
4.3.8/9	Recreation Management	4-121
4.3.10	Mineral Management	4-124
4.3.11	Cultural Management	4-125
4.3.12	Lands and Land Use Authorization	4-127
4.3.13	Socioeconomic Values	4-128
4.4	Small DWMA--B Alternative	4-131
4.4.1	Air Quality	4-131
4.4.2	Water Quality	4-132
4.4.3	Soil Quality	4-132
4.4.4	Biological Resources	4-133
4.4.4.1	Wildlife Management	4-134
4.4.4.2	Vegetation Management	4-136
4.4.5	Wilderness Management	4-137
4.4.6	Livestock Grazing Management	4-139
4.4.7	Wild Horses and Burro Management	4-139
4.4.8/9	Recreation Management and Motorized-Vehicle Access	4-142
4.4.10	Mineral Management	4-144
4.4.11	Cultural Management	4-145
4.4.12	Lands and Land Use Authorization	4-146
4.4.13	Socioeconomic Values	4-147
4.5	Summary of Impacts by Alternative	4-150
4.6	Cumulative Effects	4-170
4.6.1	Prior to 1976	4-170
4.6.2	The 1976 Federal Land Policy and Management Act and the 1980 California Desert Conservation Area Plan	4-170
4.6.3	State and Federal Endangered Species Acts	4-171
4.6.4	The California Desert Protection Act	4-172
4.6.5	Benefits to Species and Habitats	4-172
4.6.6	New Land Use Plans/CDCA Plan Amendments--2002	4-172
	Conclusion	4-176
	Chapter 5—Plan Monitoring	5-1
5.1	Purpose and Scope	5-1
5.2	One-time, Continuous, and Sequential Monitoring	5-2
5.3	Collaboration in Monitoring	5-2
5.4	Primary Monitoring Subjects	5-2
	Chapter 6—Implementation	6-1

Chapter 7—Consultation and Coordination	7-1
7.1 Public and Agency Involvement in the Planning Process	7-1
7.1.1 Issue Identification/Public Scoping	7-1
7.1.2 Plan Development	7-2
7.1.3 DEIS and FEIS: Distribution, Public Review, Protest of Decisions	7-2
7.1.4 Endangered Species Act Consultation	7-3
7.1.5 Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer	7-4
7.1.6 Consultation with Native Americans	7-4
7.1.7 Other Consultations	7-4
7.2 Distribution of the Draft Plan and Draft EIS	7-4
7.3 Public Comments and Responses	7-10
7.4 List of Preparers	7-10

References

Glossary

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Appendices in Volume II

List of Tables

Table 1-1.	Land Ownership in the Planning Area	1-4
Table 1-2.	Summary of Significant Management Issues and Action	1-7
Table 2-1.	Summary of Issues and Proposed Plan Amendments to the CDCA Plan	2-5
Table 2-2.	Proposed Plan Grazing Guidelines for Range Types	2-15
Table 2-3.	Proposed Range Improvements for the No Action Alternative	2-23
Table 2-4.	Distribution of Land Ownership in the Chemehuevi DWMA	2-26
Table 2-5.	Distribution of Land Ownership in the Chuckwalla DWMA	2-26
Table 2-6.	Proposed Range Improvements for the Proposed Plan	2-29
Table 2-7.	Length and Estimated Costs of Proposed Fencing	2-32
Table 2-8.	Proposed Range Improvements for the Small DWMA--A Alternative	2-35
Table 2-9.	Proposed Range Improvements for the Small DWMA--B Alternative	2-39
Table 2-10.	Appropriate Herd Size	2-63
Table 2-11.	Biological Parameters to Minimize Harassment of Wildlife and Disruption of Habitats	2-68
Table 2-12.	Comparison of Routes Open and Closed by Alternatives	2-71
Table 2-13.	Size of Washes Closed Zones by Alternative	2-72
Table 2-14.	Summary of Routes of Travel Designations for No Action Alternative	2-74
Table 2-15.	Summary of Routes of Travel Designations for Proposed Plan	2-79
Table 2-16.	Summary of Routes of Travel Designations for Small DWMA--A Alternative	2-83
Table 2-17.	Summary of Routes of Travel Designations for Small DWMA--B Alternative	2-87
Table 2-18.	Private Lands in Management Areas for Proposed Plan	2-93
Table 2-19.	Private Lands in Proposed Management Areas Under Small DWMA--A Alternative	2-94
Table 2-20.	Private Lands in Proposed Management Areas Under Small DWMA--B Alternative	2-95
Table 2-21.	Comparison of Alternatives	2-101
Table 3-1.	Acres and percentages of desert tortoise critical habitat in various federal and state jurisdictions and private ownership	3-8
Table 3-2.	List of desert tortoise permanent study plots in the planning area and the years surveyed using standard protocols.	3-10
Table 3-3.	Existing bighorn sheep habitat management plans in the NECO Planning Area	3-11
Table 3-4.	Acres (and percent of area) for three categories of bighorn sheep use in livestock grazing allotments in the NECO Planning Area	3-12
Table 3-5.	Special Status Plant Species in the NECO Planning Area	3-23
Table 3-6.	Acres of BLM Wilderness in the NECO Planning Area	3-34
Table 3-7.	Acreage (and percent) of Grazing Leases in Tortoise Critical Habitat and BLM Tortoise Categories	3-39
Table 3-8.	Past Grazing Use	3-40
Table 3-9.	Characteristics of Herd Management Areas	3-45
Table 3-10.	Age Composition of Burros in Herd Management Areas	3-46
Table 3-11.	Characteristics of Herd Areas and Herd Management Areas in California Desert Conservation Area	3-51

Table 3-12.	Areas of critical environmental concern designated for cultural resources values	3-76
Table 3-13.	Distribution of historic and archaeological sites in the NECO Planning Area	3-77
Table 3-14.	Distribution of cultural resource survey activity in the NECO Planning Area	3-77
Table 4-1.	Federal Lands in Critical Habitat that are Withdrawn from Multiple-use	4-13
Table 4-2.	Bighorn Sheep Use Areas in Livestock Grazing Allotments in the NECO Planning Area	4-20
Table 4-3.	Burro Herd Areas, Herd Management Areas, and Burro Concentration Areas in Desert Tortoise Critical Habitat	4-24
Table 4-4.	Bighorn Sheep Use Areas in Burro Herd Management Areas in the NECO Planning Area	4-24
Table 4-5.	Natural Communities within JTNP, CMAGR, and BLM Wilderness, in acres and percent of total	4-34
Table 4-6.	Natural Communities within each BLM Multiple Use Class	4-35
Table 4-7.	Natural Communities within BLM grazing allotments	4-35
Table 4-8.	Average Road Mileage (Not Including Navigable Washes) per Square Mile in Each Natural Community	4-39
Table 4-9.	Current Herd Area, Herd Management Area, and Appropriate Management Level in the NECO Planning Area	4-51
Table 4-10.	Identified Cultural Resources within Grazing Allotments by Alternative	4-58
Table 4-11.	Identified Cultural Resources in HMA for Each Alternative.	4-59
Table 4-12.	Cultural Resources in the Area of Potential Effect, by Alternative ^a	4-61
Table 4-13.	Area of DWMAS and Critical Habitat for Desert Tortoise	4-74
Table 4-14.	Area and percent of area for Bighorn Sheep Use in DWMA and Bighorn Sheep WHMA areas for the Proposed Plan	4-76
Table 4-15.	Area and Percent of Area for Three Categories of Bighorn Sheep Use Within Burro Herd Management Areas	4-79
Table 4-16.	Areas and Percent of Total Area of Each Natural Community Within Large DWMA	4-81
Table 4-17.	Areas and percent of total of each natural community within BLM cattle grazing allotments: Lazy Daisy Cattle	4-82
Table 4-18.	Comparison of HMA Size and AML for the No Action and Proposed Plan Alternatives	4-94
Table 4-19.	Privately Owned Lands with five or less owners per section and Public Lands in Conservation Area, Proposed Plan	4-107
Table 4-20.	Areas for three categories of Bighorn Sheep use in Cattle Grazing Allotments in the NECO Planning Area	4-111
Table 4-21.	Areas of each Natural Community within Small DWMA	4-114
Table 4-22.	Areas of each Natural Community within BLM Grazing Allotments	4-115
Table 4-23.	Comparison of Herd Management Areas and Appropriate Management Level for No Action and Small DWMA--A Alternatives	4-119
Table 4-24.	Privately owned lands with five or less owners per section and public lands in conservation area, Small DWMA--A Alternative	4-130
Table 4-25.	Comparison of Herd Management Areas (acres) and Appropriate Management Level for No Action and Small DWMA--B Alternative	4-140

Table 4-26.	Privately Owned Lands with five or less owners per section and Public Lands in Conservation Area, Small DWMA--B Alternative	4-148
Table 4-27.	Summary of Impacts by Alternative	4-150
Table 5-1.	NECO Plan Monitoring	5-3

List of Figures

Figure 1-1. Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Planning Process	1-5
Figure 3-1. State Area Designation, PM10	3-2
Figure 3-2. State Area Designation, Ozone	3-2